OVE-STORIES OF MELVILLE CHATER

CUPID, SKYSCRAPER

HEY worked in a gray stone beehive of twenty stories and all modern improvements. Their arena was a long, resonant marble hall lying between a row of electric lit booths, and the tall shafts of iron lattice that were lit booths, and the tall shafts of iron lattice that were referred to in advertisements as "a perfectly equipped elevator service." She sat behind a showcase, under a huge gilt sign which bawled of Someone's Chocolates; he stood in a little cage, beneath a dim light, his hand on a lever, watching the bulb before him blaze red and die away, and then shot up and down an iron tunnel, to the clash of gates and the echoing burden of "Going up!—Twentieth, all out! Going down!—All out, Broadway!"

On the first morning he, longing before his cage, noted her

On the first morning he, lounging before his cage, noted her novel, her raiment of gorgeous ease, her pale, snippy face; she, lolling behind her counter, noted his smart gray uniform, im-

lolling behind her counter, noted his smart gray uniform, important pose and aggravating simper.

"Say," shot his glance, "ain't we swell?"

"My," hers returned, "but we're smart!"

Their affair advanced precipitately, as all great passions; it was a rare case of mutual repulsion at first sight. His pompous manner, superior sneer and avidity for cigarettes and dime sensationalism were all precious fuel to her hate; he gloated savagely over her gala fineries, acid serenity and incessant consumption of caramels and yellow bound sentiment. He sneered at the business pretensions of one who read all day, and who from very ennui received messages and counted words and who from very ennui received messages and counted words for the Western Union girl. On such occasions he would

"Hullo, Caramels! Think you're busy, don't you?"
"Ah, go on, Locals!" she would retort deftly. "You go back to your cage."

to your cage."

This epithet was tipped with subtle venom. His ambition was to shoot unhampered up and down the iron tunnel, displaying on his cap the gilt legend "Express," to reject the rabble with an uncompromising "First stop the tenth," instead of creeping along at the beck of every scrub woman; and he had studied the mechanism of the elevators to such good effect that once, when a cage stuck between floors, he ran down to the big cable reels in the basement and adjusted the difficulty. In fact, he mastered the cause so thoroughly that thereafter several of the elevators manifested a persistent tendency to stick, and his services soon became regarded as invaluable.

The term "Locals," scurrifously applied, demanded satisfaction; this he collected on the instalment plan, by a thousand ingenious plagues. Once he snatched from Caramels "Her Patal Beauty; or, Wooed but Unwed," and declaimed rapturously:—

"'Back, sir." cried Marguerite Daincourt, rising to her full height, lovely in angry pallor, 'Remember you are an English nobleman, while I am but a tradesman's child."

"The Earl of Darnleigh gnashed his white, leonine teeth. 'Proud beauty!' he hissed, 'you shall rue the day that you spurned the suit of Henry De Vere.'

"But she, silencing him with an imperious flash from under her raven lashes, swept haughtily from the apartment,"

Locals stopped short, for Caramels, snatching at his pocket, opened cross fire from "Felt Footed Fred; or, the Boy Sleuth of '49."

"Mark that man"

"Mark that man!" " 'I mark him.'

"Mark him well; that is Bullseye Bill, leader of the gang.

"The REAL like GUERD FORTH, SUPCRIFICATION TO THE PEPERT Laby."

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THE REAL THING STEPPED FORTH SUPPORTING THE PEDFECT LADY!

WMIRLAN

tunately I can't-can't afford a whole present, but if you and

tunately I can't—can't afford a whole present, but if you and your young lady will allow me to contribute"—

Locals went down eight floors at a jump; he had never before seen a bill with a double X-on it. Caramels was not a bit snippy; she seemed strangely touched by something. "It was just lovely of him," she murmured, "to do it in that way," "Say!" he demanded, "what do you know about them?" Caramels tilted her nose. "Locals," she retorted, acridly, "did you think my eyes wasn't workin'?"

Locals was agreeably surprised to find that she had no designs on the Real Thing; she gradually became less obnoxious. Once he even asked her opinion on a point which had long

Once he even asked her opinion on a point which had long puzzled him.

"Why don't he?" she echoed. "That's just it—how can he?"
"How!" retorted Locals. "Can't he mail her a theatre ticket
and meet her at the show? Can't he run against her au' say,
"Excuse me'? Can't he?"

Her eye silenced him. "If you'd read about something besides Boy Sleuths," she said, "you'd find those things ain't done in real society.

in real society."

Locals gasped. This fine point of etiquette eluded him; he merely recognized that the Real Thing had lost his nerve, and what could be done about it? Often thereafter they discussed this problem, and Locals soon found that Caramels was far from suippy, when she forgot to be, and thoroughly informed on the complications of the affair. It appeared that the Perfect Lady's stepfather was missing her terribly.

One morning Caramels summoned Locals, with an ominous face; the Perfect Lady had telegraphed that she would return home next day. "Can't you think of something?" she appealed. Locals thought all night, but each scheme exploded in a blaze of impertinence when he pictured the Perfect Lady's representation.

impertinence when he pictured the Perfect Lady's reproachful

All next morning he shot up and down his tunnel, wondering what neat stratagem Felt-Footed Fred would have employed. Suddenly he was recalled from the top floor by the news that an elevator had stuck. He hurried to the basement, and soon returned in time to see the passengers alight amid cheers. As

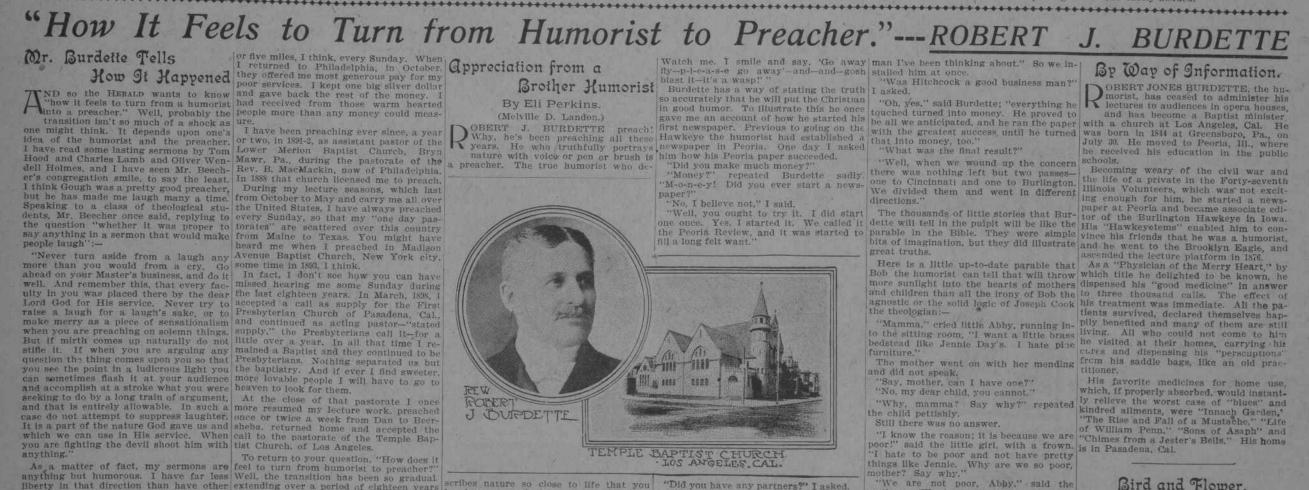
returned in time to see the passengers alight amid cheers. As the crowd dispersed Caramels summoned him. Her eyes snapped and her face blazed with sudden inspiration. She whispered a moment, then Locals returned to his post with a dazed look. Even the starter noticed that he acted queerly that morning, and when he encountered him hurrying upstairs just before noon he challenged him.

"That express," explained Locals, "she ain't running smooth yet," and, stepping into the refractory elevator, whirled aloft. At the twentieth story he transferred to his own cage, and descended slowly. He had timed it well; at the eighth floor stood the Perfect Lady, a suit case in one hand, the key of \$17 in the other, looking rather depressed, Locals thought. "Just a minute, miss," he said, and, stepping across to \$30, announced:—"Some one on the wire for you, sir."

The trio entered the cage. The Real Thing threw back his shoulders and looked inside his hat; the Perfect Lady studiously drew on her gloves, and Locals, catching a deep breath, clashed

drew on her gloves, and Locals, catching a deep breath, clashed

"How It Feels to Turn from Humorist to Preacher."--- ROBERT



and did not speak.

"Say, mother, can I have one?"
"No, my dear child, you cannot."
"Why, mamma? Say why?" repeated the child pettishly.
Still there was no answer.

"I know the reason; it is because we are poor!" said the liftle girl, with a frown. "I hate to be poor and not have pretty things like Jennie. Why are we so poor, mother? Say why."

"We are not poor, Abby," said the mother. "We have all the comforts of life."

A wild robin swings on a wind tossed tree.